

MOSCOW'S AIMS HAVE NOT CHANGED

Khrushchev's "Peace Offensive" Imperils NATO

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ALL but ten years have now passed since the commencement of the Soviet blockade of West Berlin. That was a crisis which involved the Soviet Union and the Western powers in a more direct and nearly belligerent conflict than anything that has happened since. Looking back on it with the hindsight we have in 1958, we can appreciate by how narrow a margin the West then succeeded in holding its ground and how disastrous would have been the consequences of yielding.

The political trend in London and Washington during the first phase of the blockade was towards surrender. It was generally considered unlikely that West Berlin could be supplied for long by means of an air lift, and if it could not be, the only choice was between handing over the city to the Russians or trying to break through by force from West Germany—a course which found no majority support among Western statesmen at that time. In the event, as we all know, the air lift was successful, and the Russians flinched from the final step of shooting down the transports; thus the West gained a defensive victory, and in the following year the resistance to Soviet political pressure in Central Europe was consolidated by the conclusion of the North Atlantic alliance. Since then, in spite of all the discords of the cold war, there has been no serious violation of the boundaries either of what has now become the German Federal Republic or of the Western occupation sectors of Berlin.

It is worth while today recalling these

events because we have entered a new phase of Soviet-Western relations which bears a strong resemblance to the situation in the spring of 1948. This time there has not so far been any direct attempt to force the Western powers out of Berlin, but since the hoisting of the Sputnik into outer space an atmosphere of menace similar to that of 1948 has been created and has produced similar psychological reactions. There is widespread among the Western peoples a sense of crisis and urgency, a feeling that, unless agreement can quickly be reached with Russia, something dreadful is going to happen. The enormous impression made on men's minds everywhere by the first Sputnik has been followed up by a highly publicized diplomatic offensive combining boasts, warnings, and appeals for negotiations "at the summit" to relieve international tension. From a survey of Soviet official and semi-official utterances since the Kremlin abruptly and truculently broke off the disarmament negotiations five months ago, it is evident that the Soviet leaders are trying to use their suddenly revealed new strength to bounce the Western powers out of the political and strategic positions they have held ever since the NATO coalition was formed. It is no less evident that these tactics, when brought to bear on a state of popular feeling weary of the cold war and deeply scared by forecasts of the horrors of nuclear bombardment, have had a considerable measure of success on the home fronts of Western governments.

In reality, the advent of the intercontinental ballistic missile has by no means produced a radical change in the strategic situation. For several years now the NATO and Soviet blocs have had the capacity to inflict the most frightful, if not annihilating, devastation on each other with atomic or hydro-

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gen bombs from piloted aircraft. Theoretically the bomber can be intercepted by the defense, whereas the stratospheric missile (so far) cannot; but in practice enough bombers would probably get through to inflict calamitous blows, and their aim against particular targets would almost certainly be far more accurate than that of long-range missiles is likely to be for a long time to come. The Sputnik and its missile sister have thus neither made the prospect of all-out nuclear warfare substantially more terrible than it was before, nor have they significantly increased Russia's chances of winning such a contest—insofar as it can be expected that either side could be a winner in the traditional sense of winning a war. But subjectively, vast numbers of people have become convinced that the prospect of war has been rendered far more appalling by the arrival of the intercontinental missile and that Russia has gained a great advantage over the West, so that it is now urgently necessary to come to terms with Moscow, even at the cost of far-reaching concessions to Soviet demands.

POLITICALLY, there has been no change in the situation in Central Europe which should make Western governments more anxious than they have been over the last ten years to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on any terms which do not conform to their basic principles. The division of Europe remains as it has been since the immediate postwar period, with Germany divided and Communist regimes in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary; the line of demarcation between the two worlds is the one which has existed since the victors of the Second World War took over their zones of military occupation amid the ruins of Hitler's Reich, and the risks of a military clash on that line are neither greater nor less than they have been for the past dozen years. Neither side will cross the line in force unless it deliberately seeks a major war, for each side knows that the violation must immediately and automatically involve large-scale hostilities between the great

powers. The situation is tense, yet it is stable, because the spheres of power are clearly defined, the forces of the great powers are directly committed, and there cannot be any reasonable doubt what would be the consequences of a forward move in either direction.

It is nevertheless the aim of Soviet propaganda to persuade people that this situation is intolerably dangerous and must be altered forthwith. Things cannot go on as they are, we are told, without an explosion. But what is it proposed to substitute for the present state of affairs? Khrushchev put forward his idea of a substitute in his television broadcast to America last year when he said that, if all American forces were withdrawn from Europe, Russian forces would likewise be withdrawn within the frontiers of the Soviet Union, and the world would then see that the Kadar regime in Hungary would "flourish for ages to come." In this proposal he indicated the supreme objective of Soviet foreign policy, which is to bring about the removal of American troops and bases from Europe. Closely linked with this purpose is Khrushchev's unwavering insistence that the reunification of Germany must be effected not by free national elections—which would inevitably leave the Communists as a small minority in Germany as a whole—but through a confederation of the two existing states, which would make the reunited Germany a monstrous and unstable combination of democratic and totalitarian elements, with the Communist party and its officials as a privileged body under Russian protection. The attainment of these two objectives, taken together, would be sufficient to give the Soviet dictatorship what has so far eluded it—an effective domination of Europe, Western as well as Eastern. It is no wonder that Khrushchev thinks his prestige success with the Sputnik has given him a golden opportunity to launch a diplomatic offensive and exploit dismay and despondency in the West in order to get a decisive revision of the European balance of power in his favor.

There is all the difference in the world between an overland and an overseas dis-

engagement of forces. If the Russian army were to withdraw to Brest-Litovsk, it could move forward again at any time across the North European plain with the full speed of modern mechanized formations. But if the American units now stationed in Europe were to be pulled back across the Atlantic, it would be a fatally slow and difficult business to bring them again to Europe in an emergency, whatever might be the policy of the U.S. government in relation to an outbreak of war in Europe. The defense of Western Europe by the Atlantic community requires as its basic condition the permanent presence of sizable American and British components on the Continent, with their tactical atomic weapons, ready to meet any sudden onslaught. It is their presence, in spite of the NATO numerical inferiority to the ground forces of the Soviet bloc, which provides, far more than any threat of suicidal massive retaliation, the deterrent to further Soviet expansion and the assurance to the Continental members of NATO that they will not be left in the lurch if Russian tanks are on the move. Even with the American and British components the defensive strength of Western Europe is at a dangerously low level; without them, there could be no effective defense at all, and Moscow would be in a position to dictate to all the Continental countries, even if Soviet forces had been pulled back out of East Germany and Poland. Khrushchev's boast that in such circumstances the Communist regime in Hungary would continue without a Russian army of occupation on the spot was well enough founded: not, of course, because the Hungarian people would have any more love for their Communist rulers than they had in October 1956, but because the Russians would be so obviously masters of the Continent and could intervene at any time without the possibility of interference by the West.

KHRUSHCHEV's proposal was too obviously designed for Russia's advantage to have any attraction for the Western governments, but the idea of disengagement soon began

to have a wide vogue in Western countries as a means of lessening international tension and reducing the danger of war, particularly after the successive announcements of Russia's intercontinental missile and earth satellites had prepared the ground psychologically for the advocacy of new policies. In Britain the greatest impetus for public discussion of disengagement was provided by Mr. George Kennan, who, as a visiting professor at Oxford, was invited to give a series of lectures over the BBC and reached an audience exceptionally large for the seriousness of his theme. His words had all the more effect because they synchronized with a stir in the Labor party produced by a plan for disengagement which was put forward in a speech at the end of October by Mr. Denis Healey, one of the party's specialists on foreign affairs.

The form of disengagement contemplated by Mr. Kennan corresponded to Khrushchev's proposal in that it required the withdrawal of the armed forces of the United States and Britain from the European continent, in return for a Russian withdrawal to the land frontier of the Soviet Union. It also required a prohibition of nuclear weapons, whether strategic or tactical, to the European countries thus evacuated. Instead of incorporating the tactical atomic weapon into the defense of Western Europe, Kennan urged resort to "the possibility of separating geographically the forces of the great nuclear powers, of excluding them as direct factors in the future development of political relationships on the continent, and of inducing the continental peoples by the same token to accept a higher level of responsibility for the defense of the continent than they have recently borne."

Mr. Kennan admitted that "in the event of a mutual withdrawal of forces the continental NATO countries would still require, in addition to the guarantees embodied in the NATO Pact, some sort of continuing local arrangements for their own defense." The premises of his argument, however, made it extremely difficult for him to explain how any system of security could be devised

under his plan. While apparently assuming that the North Atlantic alliance would remain in being, with "guarantees" for its Continental European members, his whole conception of disengagement virtually ruled out any intervention by the United States or Britain in Europe in the event of a subsequent aggression there by the Soviet Union.

His main concern was that the great powers should avoid fighting one another, and that the United States and Britain should never use nuclear weapons unless directly attacked with them. The logical implication of his thinking, therefore, was that if the Soviet Union were to violate a disengagement pact by renewed military intervention in the affairs of other European countries, these countries must be left to their fate. But Kennan escaped from this conclusion by two lines of argument. In the first place, he played down the danger of Soviet military coercion in Europe, even if there were no formidable obstacles to it. In spite of the role of Soviet military occupation in the creation of the Communist regimes beyond the Iron Curtain and the ruthless use of military force to crush the Hungarian national rising only one year previously, Kennan informed his hearers that "we must get over this obsession that the Russians are yearning to attack and occupy Western Europe and that this is the principal danger." He did not deny that there was a Communist danger, but claimed that it was really one of internal subversion, and that "it is on the front of political realities, not on regular military battlefields, that the threat of Russian Communism must primarily be met." He was unable, however, entirely to disregard the possibility of a Russian invasion as a problem for the nations in question, and to provide against this he invoked a second line of argument, to the effect that a country could adequately defend itself with territorial militia forces which would "constitute the core of a civil resistance movement on any territory that might be overrun by the enemy." In spite of the lesson of Budapest, where the bravest resistance fighters could not prevail against Russian tanks and ar-

tillery, he thought the soldiers on whom their countries' independence must be staked "should not be burdened with heavy equipment." He maintained that any European nation which was prepared to offer guerilla resistance and could tell Moscow that "we are in a position to assure you that not a single Communist or other person likely to perform your political business will become available to you for this purpose" would have "little need for foreign garrisons to assure its immunity from Soviet attack."

CRITICS of Mr. Kennan's thesis did not fail to inquire how a democratic country with a domestic Communist party could possibly put itself into a position to deny a Soviet invader the services of the latter for the establishment of a "people's" administration after the conquest. The Communist parties of Western Europe may not be strong enough, even in France and Italy, to have any chance of capturing governmental power in peace-time, but they could operate as dangerous fifth columns in time of war, and in the event of a Soviet conquest they could provide—together with the inevitable *Grotesques* and *Fierlings*—the personnel for the new totalitarian order. If the independence and internal political liberties of Western European nations cannot be assured any regular military protection, and are to depend on almost unarmed civil resistance, there is no reason for supposing that such resistance would be more effective in West Germany, France, or Holland than it has been in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary. Kennan has expressed the hope that if the great powers were to remove their forces from the area between Brest-Litovsk and the Bay of Biscay, "the competition between two political philosophies" could be carried on there "in a manner disastrous neither to the respective peoples themselves nor to the cause of world peace." But this is to speak of Communism as if it were a doctrine competing with rivals for political power through constitutional means of free debate and free elections. If this were indeed the situation, it would mean

that Communists had become good democrats, and there would not in fact be "two political philosophies" any more in the sense in which they exist today. But the basic aim of Communism—and what differentiates it from democratic socialism—is the purpose of taking and holding power by force and establishing the permanent dictatorship of the party. Violence remains, as it has been from the beginning, fundamental to the Leninist *Weltanschauung*, and it is vain to expect this violence to be confined within particular frontiers, except insofar as a balance of armed power renders their violation inexpedient.

It is quite true that the expansion of an ideology cannot be thwarted merely by troops under arms; there is a struggle for men's minds which cannot be decided by material power alone. But possession of the power of the state, with the ensuing monopoly of education, publicity, and propaganda, is the principal means by which a totalitarian faith extends its following; and the capture of state power, whether by internal revolution, by invasion and occupation from outside, or by a combination of both, is the decisive turning point in the process. At the present time, the total armed power of the Communist world is probably greater, and its purely ideological appeal less, than at any time since the death of Lenin. The danger for Western Europe is not that its democratic governments may be overthrown by purely internal Communist revolutions, but that Communist rulers may be installed by Soviet power in Bonn, Paris, and Rome, as they were once installed in Pankow, Warsaw, and Budapest.

The plan of disengagement put forward in his recent address by Mr. Healey differs radically from Professor Kennan's in that it realistically recognizes that Europe would be left virtually defenseless if all American and British forces were to be withdrawn from the Continent; it therefore provides for the retention of these forces in the extreme west of the Continent as part of the guarantee for the security of the proposed "neutral belt." The neutral belt, in his con-

ception, would include the two Germanies, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary; France, Belgium, and Holland would be left as countries in which American and British units would still be stationed. This is a project which in its strategic implications is so far removed from Khrushchev's aim of getting America and Britain out of Europe that it seems very unlikely that he could ever be brought to consider it; and insofar as a proposal for disengagement, if it is not to be merely an academic exercise, must be such as to afford a possible basis for negotiation with Moscow, the Healey plan is not likely to get very far as a serious initiative in international politics. Since it has, nevertheless, some very attractive features and has been influential in spreading the idea of disengagement to a wide public, it is worthwhile to assume, for the sake of argument, that the Soviet government could be induced to accept a scheme of disengagement on the lines advanced by Mr. Healey. Let us then inquire what kind of situation is likely to develop in Central Europe after the disengagement has taken place.

HEALEY and other advocates of disengagement claim that it would not only reduce the danger of war by separating the armed forces of the great powers, but that it would also facilitate the self-liberation of the satellite countries. This expectation needs to be examined very closely. Healey argues that "if you could get the Red Army out of Eastern Europe and convince the people of Eastern Europe that it would not come back—this, of course, is equally important—then the East European countries would cease to be under direct Soviet control, although for various reasons most of them would still remain friendly to the Soviet Union and most of them would retain many of the political, economic and social characteristics of a Communist society." But would this be good enough from the Soviet point of view? Or, to put the question differently, can the Communist dictatorship of the Soviet Union afford to allow a Communist government to be re-

moved in any East European country where it has been established?

Healey maintains that the Soviet Union would have no substantial interest in controlling Eastern European countries if they could get an agreement which insured the neutrality of the whole region. He argues that the satellites are not a source of military strength to the Soviet Union, but rather of danger, that they are unreliable as allies, and that, since they now have to be given economic aid instead of being mere tributaries of the Soviet Union, they are no longer economic assets. Hence, he infers, Moscow might be glad to get rid of them, if only the security of the Soviet Union could be otherwise assured. This view, however, disregards the importance of the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe for the stability of the regime in the Soviet Union itself. Basic to the ideology by which the party justifies its dictatorial rule is the notion that the predetermined historical trend of the age is towards Communism and that its ultimate victory is everywhere inevitable; the vested interest of capitalism may hold up its advance in various parts of the world, requiring periods of "peaceful coexistence," but it is unthinkable that any Communist regime should be overthrown by a popular upheaval in a country where it has once been firmly established. If such a thing were to happen, it would call in question the very foundations of Communist belief and would threaten Communist rule not only in other countries where Soviet power has imposed it but also in the Soviet Union itself. Yet that is just what would be likely to happen if the Eastern European peoples were to be convinced that they were secure against Soviet military intervention on behalf of their Communist governments. When it happened in Hungary in the autumn of 1956, the national rising was ruthlessly crushed by Soviet forces, and nobody doubts that in present circumstances any similar rising elsewhere would be crushed in the same way. But the idea of disengagement and the creation of a neutral belt in Europe implies that the Soviet Union must under-

take not to interfere in the internal affairs of those countries which are now Communist-ruled, as well as of those which are now non-Communist. What guarantee then would Moscow have against a repetition of the events of 1956 and the emergence of political democracy in one or more of the ex-satellites?

ANY agreement on disengagement between the Soviet Union and the Western powers would appear to involve one of two alternatives. The first is that the Soviet Union would seek and obtain from the West some kind of formal recognition of the legitimacy of the East European regimes over and above the ordinary recognition which is given to governments in diplomatic relations—an endorsement of the status quo which would make any anti-Communist revolution in these countries a defiance, not only of Moscow but of the new Concert of the Great Powers. This would be a moral betrayal by the West of the rights of the peoples of those countries—even though Western governments might be prepared to agree to it—in the style of Yalta and Potsdam for the sake of a settlement with Russia. The other alternative would be to avoid any precise definition of the status quo to be recognized in Europe and rely on a general guarantee of non-intervention in the neutral belt. But if there were an anti-Communist revolt, and if in spite of the guarantee the Soviet Union were to intervene against it, the Western governments would have to make up their minds what to do. The probability is that in such circumstances they would take none but diplomatic action and that the Soviet government would proceed on the assumption that it would not meet with any military interference.

It may be said that even if this were to happen, the situation would be at any rate no worse than it is now, since Russia would merely be preserving a Communist regime that already exists, and that it would be better in that after disengagement the conflict would be less likely to involve the great powers. But this does not apply to Ger-

many, for any Soviet intervention in Germany would involve the country as a whole and would be likely to provoke a counter-intervention from the West, with a possibility of armed clashes much greater than exists at the present time, when each side has its own clearly defined territorial sphere. The question is whether there could be any durable disengagement without a satisfactory solution of the problem of the reunification of Germany. The present line of demarcation between the armed forces of the great powers is the former zonal boundary which now divides the territories controlled by the rival Bonn and Pankow governments. To remove the great power forces and leave the two German regimes face to face with each other in bitter enmity would certainly not be a way of promoting peace in the area, nor would it be likely even to achieve the aim of averting involvement of the great powers, for the latter could not be indifferent to the outcome of civil strife in Germany.

THE danger is so obvious that it must be assumed that any negotiations for disengagement would be made conditional on a solution of the problem of German unity. If disengagement were regarded as desirable, the allies might be willing to renounce their requirement that a unified Germany should be free to choose its international alignment; they would presumably be prepared to agree to a German withdrawal from NATO in return for a withdrawal of Poland and Czechoslovakia from the Warsaw Pact and the neutrality of all three countries. But could they go further and renounce their demand that the government and institutions of the new unified Germany should be left to the verdict of free elections? There is so far no sign that the Soviet Union is ready to abandon the Pankow regime and allow the German Communists to be reduced to the insignificance that free elections would inevitably inflict on them. The Soviet government denies that the reunification of Germany is a matter for decision between Moscow and the Western powers, and insists that it must be

arranged between the Bonn and Pankow governments negotiating as two co-equal sovereign entities. The Communists appear to envisage a kind of federation in which the two parts of Germany would retain their existing political systems but would combine to form a federal government on a basis of parity. Dr. Adenauer has taken his stand on the view that it is better for German unification to be postponed indefinitely than to be achieved on such terms, and in the recent elections in West Germany the voters endorsed his leadership by a decisive majority. So far the Western governments have also supported his stand.

Voices are now, however, being heard urging a "compromise" on the question of democracy in Germany. But a compromise between a liberal and a totalitarian order within a single state would not be the kind of compromise in which the attainment of a practical *modus vivendi* might compensate for theoretical incoherence. A federal state combining the present West and East German regimes would be a political monstrosity and would make Germany far more dangerous to the peace of the world than it is now. Since any such arrangement agreed between the Soviet Union and the Western powers would be a frustration of the will of the German people, and could only be imposed on the Bonn government by very strong pressure, it would inevitably destroy the morale of the new-born German democracy and would make German politics a field for intrigue between internationally supported factions, with a *Putsch* as the only final means of decision (and foreign military intervention as a likely consequence). If disengagement in Europe is to be contemplated by Western statesmen, an unqualified acceptance by the Soviet Union of free elections for Germany—including the right of opposition parties to put up candidates in East Germany and international observation of the polling—should be made an essential preliminary condition. But since there is no probability that the Soviet leaders in their present mood will agree to abandon the East German regime, this

means in effect giving up the idea of disengagement as a practical objective. The danger is, however, that if disengagement comes to be regarded by public opinion in Western countries as a panacea for the ills of Europe, there will be a disposition to pay whatever price seems necessary to achieve it, and the Western governments will be under pressure from their own peoples to yield in the blessed name of "compromise" on the German issue.

KHRUSHCHEV's recent tactics indicate that he is counting on his capacity to influence opinion in Western and neutral countries through a theatrical demagogic publicity in order to sweep the leaders of Western governments off their feet at a "summit" conference. His insistence on the summit meeting without a preliminary foreign ministers' conference is itself a part of this design, and he has already gained his point on this. He knows that in negotiations at ordinary diplomatic or foreign ministers' level he will be unable to get results without producing proposals to be examined in detail in all their aspects. But he believes that he can exploit the uninformed hopes and fears of the masses in democratic countries, their longing for peace and their appetite for large magniloquent generalities in place of vigorously defined undertakings. He evidently thinks that the popular pressures generated by persistent propaganda will be raised to their maximum with the super-publicity surrounding a summit conference, and that the Western leaders will not dare to go away from such a meeting with a failure to reach any agreement on the most important issues. He himself will not be under comparable pressure, for the Communist party of the Soviet Union has a total monopoly of all the means of home publicity to put the blame for any

failure to reach agreement on to the shoulders of the wicked imperialists.

It is part of the price that the West has to pay for its political liberties that its leaders must be at a disadvantage in the kind of conference from which the Western peoples are led to expect far-reaching results. It is because they are aware of this, and because of the bitter memories of the disillusionment that followed the summit conference of 1955, that Western statesmen strive to avoid the circus diplomacy favored by Khrushchev and to keep negotiations with the Soviet Union in the undramatic channels of ordinary exchanges between foreign ministries. But the public demand for conspicuous efforts to reduce international tension has compelled them to agree to the Soviet proposals for a summit conference and to abandon their requirement that a foreign ministers' conference be held first to prepare the ground. A period of great strain now lies ahead of them, for Khrushchev is certainly aiming at an occasion which will be as great a diplomatic victory for him as Yalta was for Stalin.

The West will only be able to avoid political disaster in the coming months if its governments jointly develop policies of positive challenge to the Soviet Union, instead of merely reacting to the Soviet propaganda initiatives. It is to their interest to push the question of German reunification into the forefront of all discussion and keep it there. They must not allow themselves to be maneuvered into the position of continually making niggling objections to grand projects for peace and security put out from Moscow. They should concentrate on their own demands for the freeing of Germany and make it clear that, as far as they are concerned, the only alternative to that freedom is the maintenance of the defensive frontier of the West where it now stands.